

The Attempt to Make Peace With Ireland

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ANOTHER measure to make a settlement with Ireland is to be introduced into the British Parliament early in the New Year and the character of the new scheme has just been outlined by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons. A strange time, some will say, to speak of conciliation and of peace in Ireland, where the atmosphere is more heavily charged with violence and revolt than it has been these last hundred years and virtually the whole Catholic Irish population has raised the banner of secession and independence. Only a few days before Mr. George spoke an attempt was made to assassinate Lord French, the Viceroy, who was only saved from death because instead of riding, according to custom, in the second motor car of the procession, he rode for this occasion only, whether by accident or by design, in the first car, which was scarcely attacked, while the second was riddled by bullets.

(Those who are interested in historical parallels will remember that a similar change saved the life of the Czar Alexander II in 1879. He usually traveled with two trains, his staff and baggage in the first, himself and his family in the second. At Moscow Sophie Perovsky and her fellow Nihilists had laid a mine beneath the line of the Southern Railway. They let the first train pass and blew the second up, but the train carrying the Czar and his family had been sent on first for this occasion only. The baggage train was wrecked, but the Czar went on to St. Petersburg, and the Nihilists, following close upon him, had the mortification of watching him drive to his palace through the streets of the capital.)

But the rebellion and disorder in Ireland cut both ways. The worse the symptoms, the more urgent is it to deal with the disease. Military repression does not deal with the disease; it only deals with the superficial symptoms and, driving them inward, aggravates the malady from which they spring. Moreover the military régime, working as it does through edict and court-martial, plays into the hands of the Sinn Fein Extremists. The last thing they want is a liberal-minded policy on the part of Dublin Castle and the British Government. Only two days before the attempted assassination of Lord French the present writer asked an experienced and impartial authority on the Irish situation how it was that Lord French had so long escaped attack. "Because," he answered, "Lord French's harsh military administration suits Sinn Fein very well. Had French been a liberal type of Viceroy he would have been murdered long ago; he may be murdered yet, but it is by no means so probable." A few days after the attack, I saw the same authority again and asked him for an explanation. His deliberate view was that the attempt was made in order to torpedo the introduction of the new government scheme for limited self-government in Ireland.

THE explanation of this particular incident may be right or wrong, but the psychology of the Irish revolt is the same as that of every movement which springs from a denial of the rights of nationality stubbornly and proudly held. The time when disaffection is at its worst and repression is at its harshest is the most fitting time to destroy the one and remove the need for the other by striking at the sources from which both spring. At least, the attempt must be made, even if it fails. England must put herself in the right by offering to Ireland a measure of self-government which is consistent with justice and with what the public conscience of the world demands. It does not follow that such an offer will commend itself to Ireland, least of all to Ireland as a whole. There are three parties to be considered in any Irish Settlement: Catholic Ireland, Protestant Ireland and the United Kingdom. No conceivable settlement, by whomsoever drawn up, could be agreeable to all three or even completely to two out of the three.

In fairness to England, Americans should remember that the Irish have failed even to agree among themselves. When Mr. Lloyd George called the Irish Convention in 1917 in order that Irishmen should beat out their own settlement, with a promise that if they succeeded the British Government would put it through, the followers of William O'Brien and the Sinn Feiners refused to take any part in it and, although in some directions there was unexpected agreement, even among the Nationalists in the Convention there were very serious differences. The conclusion we draw is that if now the Coalition Government, including the Unionists, proposes a Home Rule scheme, Americans should not reject and condemn it outright because Sinn Fein repudiates it. We would have them consider it on its merits, point out, if they choose, its weaknesses and faults but at the same time consider whether, like the outline of the League of Nations, it may not lead, if Irishmen themselves will give it a chance, to a genuine satisfaction of the Irish claims.

But first, it may be said, what about the Sinn Fein demand for independence, complete and absolute, of England? Now, since in questions of this kind we ought to deal only with realities, the truth is that separation of that kind is as unthinkable as the disruption of the American Union. England would never grant it; there is no party, group or even clique in this country from Land's End to John o' Groats which would allow the United Kingdom to be cut off from the open seas which are its lifeblood, by an independent, hostile Ireland. To do so would be to commit national suicide. Sinn Fein can only press its claim with any justice so long as England refuses a reasonable measure of Home Rule and if one thing is more certain than another today it is that full Dominion Home Rule is now within the reach of Ireland if it chooses to accept it. The barrier which has denied her liberties to Ireland for so long has been removed: the Unionist party in England has withdrawn its opposition. That is a most tremendous change. It is one of the greatest

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political changes of the last hundred years in England, although perhaps only Englishmen whose politics have for so long revolved around this single problem, can realize its significance.

There is one other point which we would ask Americans to ponder. We doubt very much whether the great masses of the Irish Catholics are at bottom anxious to have absolute independence of England. Until the last election they were always on the side of the Constitutional Nationalist party and Sinn Fein was but a poor minority. It was largely Mr. George's blunder in attempting to enforce conscription that drove Ireland into the arms of Sinn Fein. But how can an agricultural Ireland, which depends on the 40 millions of Englishmen at its doors for its market, desire independence when the first result might be the shutting of the market in its face? Why, it has always been an Irish grievance, and a just one, that England in the old days used tariffs to crush out Irish industries. There is, in fact, good reason to believe that a generous measure of Home Rule would be much more to the taste of the average Irishman than independence with its greater risks and very much greater burdens.

The new Government bill had to do one of two things. It had either to set up one Parliament for all Ireland with machinery by which the Ulster counties could exercise their option whether they remained in or went out, or else it had to set up two Parliaments, one for Nationalist Ireland and one for Ulster. The Government has chosen the latter of the alternatives. Here again, since we have nothing to do with make-believe, it ought to be said frankly that all parties in England are now pretty well agreed that Ulster is entitled to self-determination no less than Nationalist Ireland. Even if Sinn Fein had its way and secured independence, its first duty would be to allow Ulster to exercise the right of self-determination, in which case Ulster would certainly demand to return to the British fold. That this right does belong to Ulster is now openly admitted even by some of the Sinn Fein leaders, and the admission is not only just but helps very greatly toward a peaceful settlement. Thus Father O'Flanagan, at one time Vice President of Sinn Fein, has put the case most powerfully for the separate treatment of Ulster:

"If we reject Home Rule rather than agree to the exclusion of the Unionist part of Ulster what case have we to put before the World? We can point out that Ireland is an Island with a definite geographical boundary. That argument might be all right if you were dealing with a number of island nationalities that had these definite geographical boundaries.

"Appealing as we are to Continental nations with shifting boundaries, that argument can have no force whatever. National and geographical boundaries scarcely ever coincide. Geography would make one nation of Spain and Portugal; history has made two of them. Geography did its best to make one nation of Norway and Sweden; history has succeeded in making two of them. Geography has scarcely anything to say upon the number of nations of the North American Continent; history has done the whole thing. If a man were to try to construct a political map of Europe out of its physical map he would find himself groping in the dark.

"Geography has worked hard to make one nation out of Ireland; history has worked against it. The Island of Ireland and the national unit of Ireland simply do not coincide. In the last analysis the test of nationality is the wish of the people. A man who settles in America becomes an American by transferring his love and allegiance to the United States. The Unionists of Ulster have never transferred their love and allegiance to Ireland. They may be Irelanders, using a geographical term, but they are not Irishmen in the national sense. They love the hills of Antrim in the same way that we love the hills of Roscommon, but the center of their political enthusiasm is London, whereas the center of ours is Dublin. We claim the right to decide what is our nation; we refuse them the same right. We are putting ourselves before the world in the same light as the man in the Gospel who was forgiven ten thousand talents and proceeded to throttle his neighbor for one hundred pence. England has tired of compelling us to love her by force. We are anxious to start where England left off and to compel Antrim and Down to love us by force."

There Are Only 202 Words in the Monroe Doctrine

EVERY member of the United States Senate and of the House of Representatives that has held office since 1823 has at some time or other discussed the Monroe Doctrine. There is not a person in this country today who has not heard of that famous document. During the past year it has perhaps been the subject of more discussions than at any previous time. The indications are that it will be discussed considerably during the present year.

Comparatively few people, however, have ever taken the trouble to read it, being under the impression that it is of great length. As a matter of fact, it contains only 202 words. It was contained in President Monroe's message to Congress a little more than 96 years ago—December 2, 1823, in the following words:

"In the discussion to which this interest has given rise, and in the arrangements by which they may terminate, the occasion has been deemed proper for asserting, as a principle in which rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American

And Father Macdonald, a professor of theology in Maynooth College, has made the same point:

"Were Ireland made a republic fully independent of Great Britain, it seems to me that she would be bound to allow Home Rule for the Northeast corner on the principles underlying our claim for Home Rule in the United Kingdom, which I regard as well founded. The Protestants of Ulster differ from the majority of the race of the island not only in religion but in race, mentality, culture generally. They are at once homogeneous and heterogeneous—homogeneous in this district and heterogeneous as compared with the rest of Ireland. A minority in Ireland, they are a majority in the Northeast corner, and therefore on the principles we have been advocating are entitled to Home Rule."

These are hostile witnesses and their evidence is the more convincing. The Government has therefore decided to set up separate Parliaments for the two parts of Ireland and above the two there will be a Council or Superior House composed of an equal number of delegates (20) from each of the two Parliaments. What are the main characteristics of this scheme?

First and foremost, the two Houses can at any time, if they think fit and agree, create a single Irish Legislature for the whole of Ireland which will exercise all the powers not specifically reserved under the new scheme to the Imperial Parliament. They will not need to refer to Westminster for any further powers to do this; they can do it at any moment when they choose, provided only that they are in agreement.

The two Houses will deal with all such subjects as education, housing, labor legislation, local government, railways, roads and bridges, maintenance of order and the local judiciary. They will also have minor power of taxation.

Whenever they choose they can refer a particular subject to be dealt with by the Council. For example, transportation is clearly a subject which could be more conveniently dealt with for the whole of Ireland by a common body and it is therefore probable that it would be handed over to the Council.

It is hoped that the Council, by furnishing an experimental chamber for common action, would pave the way to a larger Home Rule, that is, to the erection of one legislature for the whole of Ireland.

Certain powers would be reserved to the Imperial Parliament: for example, foreign policy, army and navy and—until there is a single Parliament for all Ireland—the Post Office and the appointment of the higher judicial officers. Customs and Excise also will be reserved to the Imperial Parliament, but if and when Ireland creates for itself a single Legislature, the Westminster Parliament will then consider whether it should not hand over to it the administration of the Customs and Excise. Roughly speaking, the two Irish Houses would for the present have the taxing powers of an American State.

The "Ulster" of the new scheme will be the six northeastern counties with certain Catholic areas eliminated and certain Protestant border areas included.

Such in brief is the scheme. It has few friends or none in Ireland. The Ulstermen do not want the Home Rule at all. Sinn Fein repudiates completely the Imperial tie. Nationalists are dissatisfied with the powers granted to the lower Houses, dislike the splitting up of Ireland and have nothing good to say about the Council. The Southern Unionists are resentful that they should be cut off from their co-religionists and protectors in Ulster. But this general chilliness does not mean that the scheme is bad or hopeless. Long ago Mr. John Redmond declared that the British Government should frame a fair and just measure of Home Rule and present it to Ireland as something that it must accept. That is what Mr. George is actually doing today. The plan may fail. The disorder and violence in Ireland might grow until it became useless to persevere with the scheme. Let us hope it will not be so. For there is one bright gleam in this troubled sky. The party system in England failed to bring peace in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone, greatest of British Parliamentarians, failed completely. Now the times have changed. A coalition of both the great parties—supported in this case by Labor—is ready and willing to grant a measure of Home Rule. It may be an inadequate measure, but Ireland should surely grasp so great and unprecedented an opportunity. Whether she does so, in the opinion of most Englishmen today, will rest mainly with herself.

Continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization of any European power. We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence and maintain it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States."